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THE HOPE

The hope I hold
The leering demon-days
Deride, and reason plays,
Snug as a raven on a gallows-tree,
Its ancient game with me,
Flapping its wings and lewdly gibbering,
"Life is a humorous thing!"
But on I fare, clutching—
It is not gold,
The hope I hold.

The hope I hold,
Delicate cruelty
Snatches at, passing by;
And like a vine-leaf, fallen from its place
Upon a tortured face,
Offers its fragrance to betray, sighs low,
"Life is a humorous show!"
But on I fare, clutching—
It is not gold,
The hope I hold.

The hope I hold
Nature herself with glee
Derides. And destiny
With evil goblin laughter indicates

John Cowper Powys

The adamantine gates,
And with a maniac-chuckle rallies me,
"That way is closed, you see!"
But I fare on, clutching—
It is not gold,
The hope I hold:

O hope, whose face in madness I have kissed,
O hope, that art a mirage and a mist,
Shall I destroy thee now, and laugh thereat?—
It is too late for that.

John Cowper Powys

THE KIND HEART

Though I go out in cold and storm
My heart shall keep my body warm.
Though I am humble, though I am poor,
The rich are begging at my door.
I am the least a man may be,
But the great come and kneel to me.

Julia Wickham Greenwood